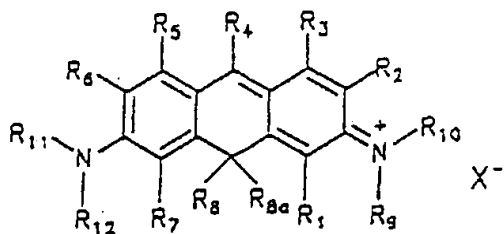


**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES
MADE, AND LISTING OF ALL CLAIMS WITH PROPER IDENTIFIERS**

Claims 1-19 (Canceled)

20. (Currently amended) ~~Use of~~ A method of detecting an analyte using labeling
groups comprising the steps of: labeling the analyte with compounds of the
general formula I



as labeling groups and utilizing in a procedure for detecting analytes:

wherein:

R₁, R₂, R₃, R₄, R₅, R₆ and R₇ are in each case independently at least one of
hydrogen, halogen, a hydroxyl, amino, sulfo, carboxyl or aldehyde group, a
saturated or unsaturated straight chain, branched or cyclic hydrocarbon group
having up to 20 carbon atoms, wherein the hydrocarbon groups include at
least one of alkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, ~~in particular phenyl, and~~
~~heteroaryl radicals, optionally heteroatoms selected from oxygen, sulfur or~~
~~nitrogen atoms, and two or more substituents;~~
or, one or more of the radicals R₁-R₇, in each case form a ring system with

adjacent substituents, said ~~form~~ a ring system containing one or more multiple bonds;

R_8 and R_{8a} are in each case independently at least one of a saturated or unsaturated, straight-chain, branched or cyclic hydrocarbon group having up to 20 carbon atoms, ~~optionally selected from a C_4 - C_6 alkyl group selected from at least one of methyl, ethyl, propyl and butyl, or an aryl or heteroaryl group, in particular phenyl, which optionally contains at least one of heteratoms selected from oxygen, sulfur or nitrogen atoms and one or more substituents;~~

or R_8 and R_{8a} can form a ring system;

R_9 , R_{10} , R_{11} and R_{12} are in each case independently at least one of hydrogen, a saturated or unsaturated, straight-chain, branched or cyclic hydrocarbon group having up to 20 carbon atoms, optionally selected from polyether, phenyl or phenylalkyl having 1-3 carbon atoms in the chain, wherein the hydrocarbon groups optionally contain at least one of heteroatoms selected from oxygen, sulfur or nitrogen atoms, and one or more substituents;

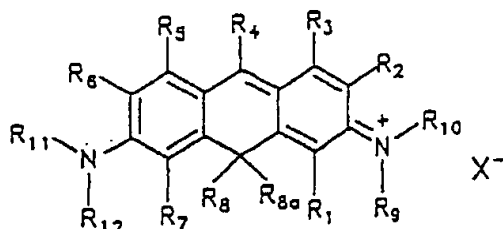
or one or more of the radicals R_9 - R_{12} , in each case can form a ring system with adjacent substituents, ~~form a~~ said ring system which can contain one or more multiple bonds; and

wherein ~~at least one of~~ $-N(R_{11})(R_{12})$ and $=N(R_9)(R_{10})$ can both be replaced by at least one of $-OR_9$ and $=O$, ~~optionally by both;~~

and X represents optionally a species of anions present for charge equalization.

21. (Currently amended) The ~~use of compounds~~ method according to claim 20, wherein the substituents of the hydrocarbon groups of R₁-R₇ are selected from at least one of halogens, hydroxyl, amino, sulfo, phospho, carboxyl, aldehyde, C₁-C₄-alkoxy, C₁-C₄-alkoxycarbonyl groups.
22. (Currently amended) The ~~use of compounds~~ method according to claim 20, wherein the substituents of the hydrocarbon groups of R₈-R_{8a} are selected from at least one of halogens, hydroxyl, amino, sulfo, phospho, carboxyl, aldehyde, C₁-C₄-alkoxy and C₁-C₄-alkoxycarbonyl groups.
23. (Currently amended) The ~~use of compounds~~ method according to claim 20, wherein the substituents of the hydrocarbon groups of R₉, R₁₀, R₁₁ and R₁₂ are selected from at least one of halogens, hydroxyl, amino, sulfo, phospho, carboxyl, carbonyl, alkoxy and alkoxycarbonyl groups.
24. (Currently amended) The ~~use of compounds~~ method as claimed in claim 20, wherein the compound I is covalently coupled to a receptor specific for an analyte to be detected.
25. (Currently amended) The ~~use of compounds~~ method as claimed in claim 20, wherein the detection procedure is selected from nucleic acid hybridization procedures and immunochemical procedures.

26. (Currently amended) A compound of the general formula I according to ~~claim 20,~~

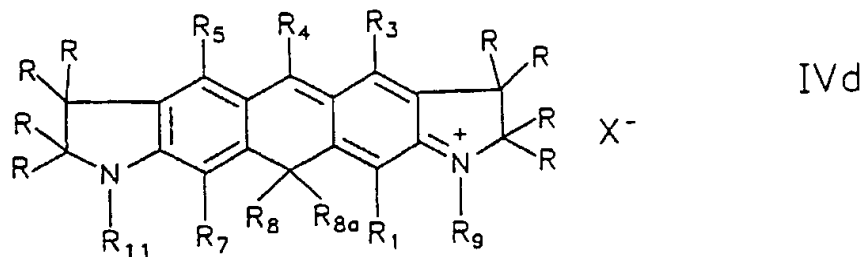
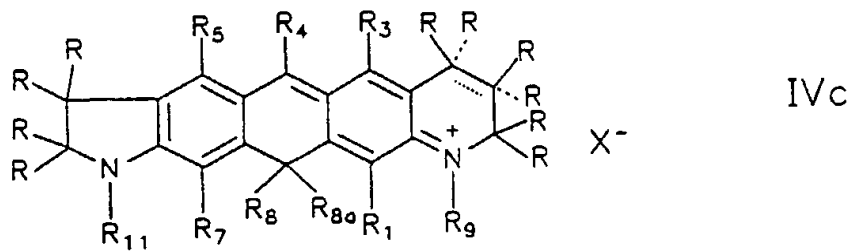
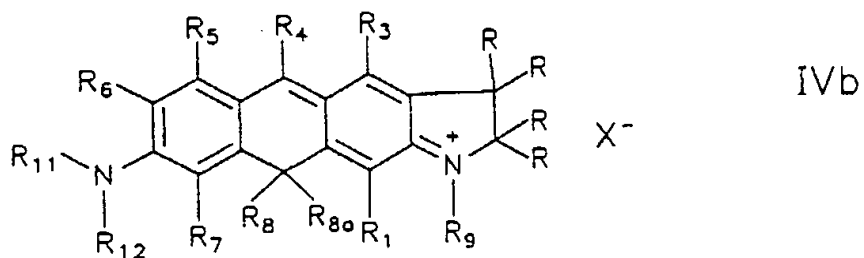
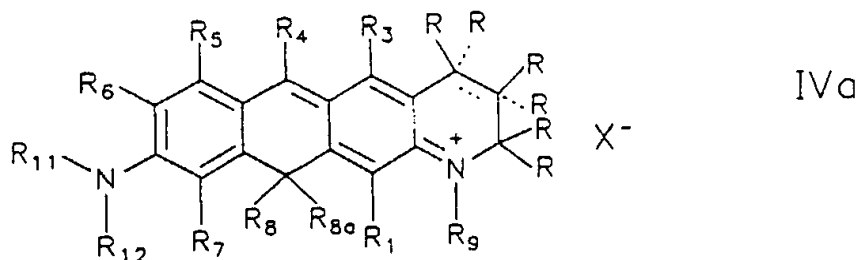


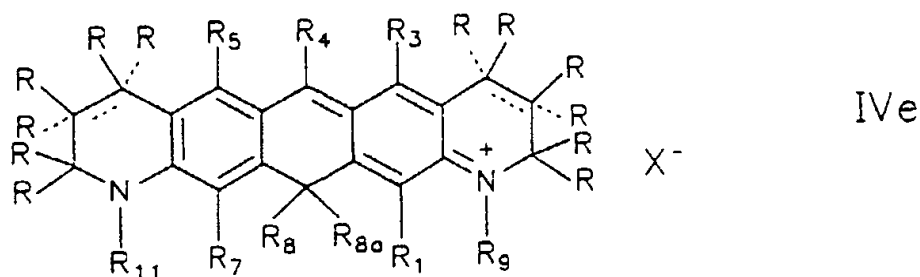
wherein R_1 - R_{12} and X are defined as in claim 20, with the proviso that if R_1 - R_3 and R_5 - R_7 are hydrogen and R_8 , R_{8a} and R_9 - R_{12} are methyl, then R_4 is not one of hydrogen, hydroxyl, methyl, isopropyl, t-butyl, phenyl, o-tolyl, p-tolyl, 2,6-dimethylphenyl, 2-t-butylphenyl, 2-isopropenylphenyl and 4-diaminomethylphenyl, and wherein at least one of R_6 is bridged with R_{11} , and R_7 with R_{12} ; at least one of R_1 is bridged with R_{10} and R_2 with R_9 to form a ring system.

27. (Cancelled) The compound according to claim 26, wherein at least one of R_6 is bridged with R_{11} , and R_7 with R_{12} ; at least one of R_1 is bridged with R_{10} and R_2 with R_9 and to form a ring system.
28. (Currently amended) The compound according to claim ~~27~~ 26, wherein the ring system contains 5-or 6-membered rings which contain one or more multiple bonds.

29. (Currently amended) The compound according to claim 26, wherein R_4 is hydrogen, C_1 - C_6 -alkyl or a ~~radical~~ group containing an aromatic ring system.
30. (Previously presented) The compound according to claim 26, wherein R_8 and R_{8a} are in each case independently at least one of methyl, ethyl and phenyl.

31. (Currently amended) The compound according to claim ~~27~~ 26, which corresponds to one of the general formulae IVa to IVe as follows:





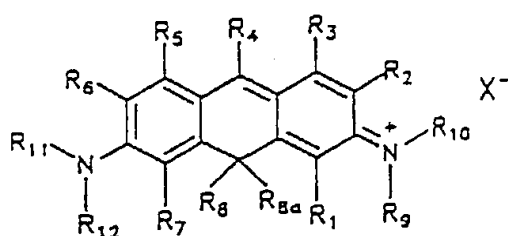
in which the broken lines are optionally double bonds, and in the presence of the double bonds the radicals R bonded via a broken line are absent; R_1 , R_3 , R_4 , R_5 , R_6 , R_7 , R_{8a} , R_9 , R_{11} , R_{12} and X are defined as in claim 20, and R in each occurrence, can be identical or different and is defined as R_1 - R_7 in claim 20.

32. (Previously presented) The compound according to claim 26 further comprising a group capable of covalent coupling.
33. (Previously presented) The compound according to claim 32, wherein the coupling group is at least one of -COOH, -NH₂, -OH and -SH.
34. (Previously presented) The compound according to claim 32 being coupled to at least one of a carrier and a biomolecule via coupling groups.
35. (Previously presented) The compound according to claim 34, wherein the carrier is selected from at least one of porous glass, ion exchange resins, dextrans, cellulose, cellulose derivatives and hydrophilic polymers.

36. (Previously presented) The compound according to claim 34, wherein the biomolecule is selected from at least one of peptides, polypeptides, nucleotides, nucleosides, nucleic acids, nucleic acid analogs and haptens.

Claim 37 is cancelled;

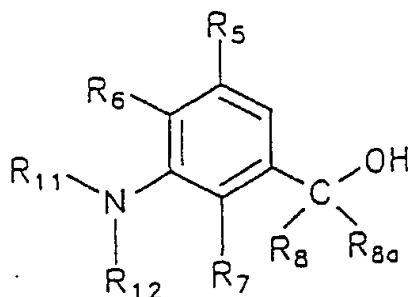
38. (Currently amended) A process for the preparation of compounds of the general formula I



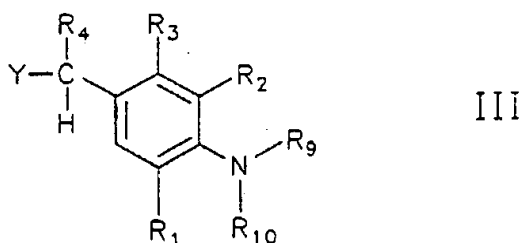
wherein R₁-R₁₂ and X are defined as in claim 20, with the proviso that both -N(R₁₁)(R₁₂) and =N(R₉)(R₁₀) are not replaced by -OR⁹ or =O.

comprising the steps of:

reacting one of a compound of the general formula II



in which R_5 , R_6 , R_7 , R_8 , R_{8a} , R_{11} , R_{12} are defined as in claim 20,
or the dehydration product of II, with a compound of the general formula III



in which R_1 - R_4 , R_9 and R_{10} are defined as in claim 20 and Y is ~~one of~~ a halogen, ~~in particular bromine~~.

in a suitable solvent, under acidic conditions and in the presence of a catalyst;
and

reacting the compound formed by ring closure between one of the compound II or its dehydration product, and the compound III, by oxidation into the compound I.

39. (Previously presented) The process according to claim 38, wherein the solvent is a nonpolar solvent, selected from one of methylene chloride, 1,2-dichloroethane or chloroform.
40. (Previously presented) The process according to claim 38, wherein the catalyst is boron trichloride.

41. (Previously presented) The process according to claim 38, wherein the acid is selected from one of sulphuric acid, phosphoric acid or polyphosphoric acid.
42. (Previously presented) The process according to claim 38, wherein the oxidant is tetrabutylammonium(meta)periodate.
43. (Currently amended) The process according to claim 38, wherein the compound (I) is obtained in a one-step process and without isolation of intermediates.
44. (New) The method of claim 20, wherein the hydrocarbon groups include at least one of phenyl and heteroaryl radicals.
45. (New) The method of claim 44, wherein the hydrocarbon groups are at least a heteroatom selected from oxygen, sulfur or nitrogen atoms and two or more substituents.
46. (New) The method of claim 20, wherein the at least one of a saturated or unsaturated, straight-chain, branched or cyclic hydrocarbon group having up to 20 carbon atoms are from a C₁-C₆-alkyl group selected from at least one of methyl, ethyl, propyl and butyl, or an aryl- or heteroaryl group.

47. (New) The method of claim 46, wherein the aryl-or heteroaryl group is phenyl, which contains at least one of a heteratom selected from oxygen, sulfur or nitrogen atoms and one or more substituents.
48. (New) The process of claim 38, wherein the halogen is selected from the group of bromine, a hydroxyl or thiol group.
49. (New) A conjugate for the detection of an analyte comprising a compound according to claim 26, which is covalently coupled to a receptor specific for an analyte to be detected.